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"You are right, sir; I am David Ashton"—p. 354.

JOHN HESKETH'S CHARGE.

BY ALTON CLYDE, AUTHOR OF "UNDER FOOT," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER LVI.—"THIS IS JOHN HESKETH'S DOING."

THE Bath chair was passing out of the enclosure, for Eva had discovered that her grandfather was tired. She had just coaxed from him a confession that he would be glad to go in and rest. When they had

reached the end of the square, and were about to cross, an elderly gentleman came hurrying round the corner, and before there was time to prevent the collision, ran against Eva. He looked so good-

humoured under the accident, and so disposed to laugh at his own expense, that Eva felt attracted towards the somewhat quaintly-dressed stranger who showed such an open, genial face above the ocean of white wool that encircled his neck in the form of a muffler, though the morning was fine enough to have dispensed with that winter-like appendage.

"I beg your pardon, miss; my mind was occupied, and I did not see you."

The next moment his glance was arrested by the old man in the chair.

"Bless me! that must be David Ashton. It's seldom I forget a face that I've once seen."

To Eva's surprise, she saw that her grandfather was getting agitated. He held out his hand as the stranger spoke.

"You are right, sir; I am David Ashton, and you are Mr. Josiah Robinson. I know the sound of your voice."

It was the kind-hearted old merchant who had stood his friend with regard to the forfeited bond, and by interposing in his behalf, saved him from the harsh measures which would have been exacted by the sterner temper of brother Matthew. The proffered hand was cordially taken.

"Yes, I am Josiah Robinson, true enough. I wasn't sure that you would remember me."

Old David answered, with a break in his voice, "I wasn't likely to forget you, sir. Your name's down in a ledger of my own."

Eva looked on with redoubled interest. There was eager scrutiny in her grey eyes as she fixed them on the stranger's face. She had heard the name, and her heart gave a quick bound. This, then, was one of the Robinson Brothers, the men who held that claim over her grandfather, and upon whose lenity he had to depend so much. She was thinking with some apprehension of the arrears already due upon several of the stipulated monthly payments, for he had always steadily refused to avail himself of the alternative of applying to Mr. Fenwick. Nor would he listen to any proposition of Eva's for the appropriation of a shilling of the money saved by her father. What a blessing this stranger was the kind brother Josiah, instead of hard Matthew, whose very name had become formidable to her. She had formed her impressions of him from the account which her grandfather had given of his dealings with the merchants. If she was feeling uneasiness on his account, or had misgivings for him concerning the result of this unexpected encounter, she might have been reassured by something in the stranger's voice, for it had the genuine ring of good-humour and good-feeling, as he said, smiling—

"But you might have mistaken me for my brother Matthew. That is often done, even by people who know us well; we are so much alike."

"I don't think they can be debtors, sir, or they would feel the difference. I couldn't make such a

mistake, for you and Mr. Matthew would never be alike to me."

How brightly it gleamed out then, the well-known trait which both the brothers Robinson shared between them, and which gave to their business partnership the cement of the fraternal bond. Neither would listen to the disparagement of the other, so Josiah took up his brother's defence in the characteristic Robinson fashion.

"That is because you don't know Matthew, David Ashton, and have been unfortunate enough to come against what I call his sharp angles. Some are worse than they seem; he is better—like some fruit, bitter in the rind, but sound and sweet as you get nearer the core. But I am afraid I am frightening away the young lady that I nearly ran over just now. Who is she?"

"My granddaughter. Eva, this is Mr. Robinson."

The girl bent her head in acknowledgment of the introduction. The gaze of the old merchant lingered with evident pleasure on the sweet young face. He took delight in all fair things. Encouraged by a glance from her grandfather, Eva ventured to say, "My uncle's house is just opposite; perhaps Mr. Robinson will come in and rest."

The timidly-spoken words pleased him, but he declined the invitation on the plea of having an appointment to meet a friend. The old man looked relieved. With the thought of his debt pressing on his mind like a dead weight, he had not been able to divest himself of the idea that it had something to do with Mr. Josiah's presence there. He was struggling between his unwillingness to touch upon a distasteful subject, and his anxiety to clear himself from any reproach of broken faith in the matter of the overdue payments. These conflicting feelings gave a painful embarrassment to his manner. Josiah Robinson saw it and came to the rescue.

"We have heard of your illness. I am glad to see you picking up again."

"Ah! yes, sir; John Hesketh would tell you that, and why the money was not sent according to agreement. I have done what I could, Mr. Robinson. When I gave my word in your office I meant to keep it, and I'm glad to have the chance of telling you; I should not like to have died without that being properly cleared up. I didn't say much to Eva, but it fretted me all the time."

This was said with a sorrowful dignity that was inexpressibly touching in conjunction with the white hair and weak, broken voice.

The merchant twisted the ends of his muffler, and, with the design of giving the old man time to recover himself, drew out his watch and noted the time before he said, "What is that about the money not being paid? I don't understand you, David Ashton."

"The agreement, sir. I would have paid the amount I promised if I had been able."

Josiah Robinson seemed puzzled. "Paid the amount you promised," he repeated, glancing inquiringly from the old man to Eva; "it seems to me that we are getting mystified. Why talk about breaking faith with us, when you have, within the last six months, paid nearly treble the amount agreed upon? so the account stands upon our books. It has made my brother Matthew revoke his first judgment, and sometimes he gets warm in praise of your honesty and——"

He was interrupted by the agitated voice of the old man. "This must be some mistake, sir. My granddaughter knows that it has been a sore trouble that I was not able to pay what I promised, and John Hesketh knows it as well."

An idea had just flashed across the mind of the merchant which seemed to explain all. The thought of the bond had preyed upon the mind of David Ashton until it had given rise to a sort of delusion, the result of illness acting upon a weakened brain. He glanced at Eva as if for confirmation of his suspicion, but, to his surprise, her look reflected the bewildered expression on the face of the old man.

"My grandfather is right, sir," she said timidly; "he has fretted about not being able to keep his word."

"Strange," commented Josiah Robinson. "It is as I said, the monthly payments have been more than doubled, and they are delivered punctually to the day."

Here David Ashton roused himself, speaking with sudden animation.

"Eva, I see it all now. This is John Hesketh's doing."

"What! do you mean that the young man has paid the money for you on his own account, and without your knowledge?" exclaimed Josiah Robinson, in evident astonishment.

"Yes, sir; it is like John's way of doing things: he agreed to pay in for me whatever money I could send, and I am sorry to say it has always been short of the amount agreed upon. He must have added the rest out of his earnings. Nobody but John Hesketh would have done it."

Eva did not attend to the explanations that followed. She scarcely knew what reply was made by Josiah Robinson, but she was conscious of listening eagerly to every word spoken in praise of John. Similar odd traits of goodness were familiar in her experience of him, but this seemed to crown them all. Her father had not misunderstood the worth of the adviser and helper which he fixed upon for them.

From that day John Hesketh's character was better understood by Eva Ashton. She was already becoming proud of him, and felt sure that, with all his oddities, he would prove himself a good, true brother.

CHAPTER LVII.

COMING TROUBLE.

"Ah! here you are at last, old fellow. I've been watching for you this half-hour. I made myself sure you would come, if only for the sake of seeing whether I was the same Ned Arden that you parted with some months ago, when he went on his travels. You'll be wanting to see if he's any worse for leaving the mother country, or if foreign manners have spoiled him. Come, Hesketh, if you are not too tired, we will take a turn round the garden and talk things over before we go into the house."

So Edward Arden rattled on in his characteristic way. He had just returned from a sojourn in Italy, and in answer to a letter written immediately after his arrival in England, John Hesketh had come to Lowfield to meet him. They commenced their walk, Edward winding his arm familiarly through that of John Hesketh, and giving free vent to his exuberant flow of spirits.

"I am glad to see you back, Ned; you stayed away quite long enough. But tell me, did you pass through London on your way home?"

"Yes."

"Then you would see Eva Ashton and her grandfather," questioned John, eagerly; "how were they looking?"

The young man seemed slightly embarrassed. He replied reluctantly, "No, I did not see them. I came down here by the night mail, and I had barely time left to get to Euston before it started. I was disappointed, but it couldn't be helped under the circumstances."

John Hesketh looked keenly at the speaker. The answer had given him surprise, mingled with something of pain, though he could not tell why it troubled him to hear that Eva's chosen lover had been content to pass through London without making an effort to see her.

Edward had expressed himself disappointed, yet his manner did not quite satisfy John. But unconscious Edward talked on in his usual lively way; he had not noticed a change in the expression of John's face.

There was a little rustic summer-house at the end of the walk. When they reached it, Edward drew his friend in, saying, "Let us sit down here, Hesketh; when we once get into the house I know I shall have to yield you up to my mother, so I am determined to have you to myself first. I often wished that I had you with me in Naples, old fellow."

John smiled, and his look softened as he met the laughing blue eyes of his companion. It was so Edward Arden always won him. Next to Eva Ashton, the second place in his heart was held by the young heir of Lowfield.

"I'm glad to see you looking so well, Ned; this travelling about has given your face what it wanted,

a healthy tan, and achieved what all your boating and cricket playing failed to do. I need not ask if you enjoyed yourself, for I am sure you did."

"You should have seen me, John. I made lots of new acquaintances out there, among the rest that of an English family spending the winter in Naples—a widow lady with a son and daughter, immensely rich and highly connected, the daughter an acknowledged beauty, whom everybody fell in love with."

"Surely not everybody, Ned."

John's tone gave point to his words. In spite of himself, the unpleasant feeling had returned with his friend's allusion to the beauty he had met in Naples.

Edward winced and coloured. "Of course, you can't mistake my meaning, Hesketh; but let us change the subject. I am not egotist enough to talk only about myself; besides, I want to hear how you got over that bother about your drawing. You did not write me all particulars, and I'm longing to hear; it was such a rascally scheme of that foreman. How did it get found out? was old Dobson shrewd enough to detect any difference between the drawings?"

"No, it was impossible; the copy was too cleverly done."

"Then the truth would probably never have come out if it had not been for the man watching behind the door."

"It was Jackson's evidence that struck the balance, Ned; he spoke out boldly to Mr. Dobson at the right time, and did me good service by supplying the proof that was wanting. But for that there might have been a doubt left on the master's mind, even though Luke Norris could not satisfactorily answer the questions put to him concerning the practical effect of the invention. Fortunately, I had kept all my calculations, and placed them in Mr. Dobson's hands. Of course, that at once settled the question."

"And how did it end?" asked Edward, eagerly.

"In the discharge of Luke Norris. The firm would not keep a man about the place who had been guilty of such a treacherous act. If he would rob a

man of his due and his good name, they said, he would do anything."

"It served him right, John. Hang it, the punishment was not half severe enough."

"I tried to intercede for him, but it was no use."

"I should think not. Nobody else beside yourself would have thought of such a thing."

"I felt sorry for him, Ned; he seemed crushed to the earth by the exposure. I thought the disgrace of the discovery might be enough punishment, and there is hope of amendment for the worst of us; besides, his wife and children will be sufferers. It is not easy for men with branded characters to retrieve their good name, and I fear he will have some difficulty in getting another situation."

"I have no pity for the fellow, Hesketh, as I can't see it in your light. He did his best to ruin you, and he deserves all he may suffer. I suppose you are foreman now. Am I to congratulate you?"

"No, for though it was offered me, I refused it."

"Refused! Hesketh, you are surely joking."

"Not at all, Ned. I had no wish to take his place."

"Why, I always thought you were ambitious to rise."

"So I am, but not by such means. My advancement shall be solely the reward of merit. I am fighting for a higher place, and until I win it, I am content to remain in my present position."

"I always thought I knew you, Hesketh, but I find I've something yet to learn. You strike higher than I had any idea of, and you have my hearty wishes for your success. You'll be sure to win, old fellow; I believe you are clever enough for anything. You say you are going to London; has it something to do with your patent?"

"Yes, Mr. Dobson has proved the utility of the invention, and I am about to—"

Here they were interrupted by the unexpected sight of Caroline, who suddenly appeared at the door of the summer-house, white-faced and breathless.

(To be continued.)

GOD'S LOVING-KINDNESS.

BY THE REV. HENRY ALLON, OF ISLINGTON.

"For thy loving-kindness is before mine eyes."—Ps. xxvi. 3.



SOME words are sermons: they fill the soul with both meaning and feeling; they suggest more than they express; they produce moods of faith and of religiousness that are sensitive, meditative, and venturesome. It is not so much the bodily life of the soul moving near to God, it is the finer sense of the soul brooding in its thoughts about God; trembling in its affections towards God; putting forth quick, sensitive feelers Godwards; indulging in loving imaginations, in bold

appropriations, in delicious dreams about God and his love. Theology has but little to say to such moods. It could not define them—it could not justify them; they belong to the emotional heart of religion, not to the logical intellect of theology. We do not so much see God as feel him; we clasp our heavenly Father's feet; we rest upon his bosom. We do not think so much as feel; it is the rest and beatitude of love.

This word "loving-kindness" is one of these potential words. It is a word of endearment

rather than of exact meaning. It is like a mother's caress: it suggests far more than it expresses. It is a great deal more than the addition of two words of tenderness; it is the multiplication of them into affluent and indefinite meaning. It affirms a great deal more than that God is loving and kind. Loving-kindness is a quality of tenderness compounded of both. No philological chemistry can analyse it; it is a presence—an atmosphere—a sentiment of unspeakable tenderness and preciousness.

Such words of wealthy meaning abound in the Bible; they inlay its great teachings of doctrine, and suffuse them with their religious glow and glory. Secular speech has no words so affluent—no argosies of meaning so wealthy. The words in our language that are fullest of meaning, and that are the most tender, are Bible words, such as only the intensity of religious feeling could coin.

We have simply therefore set before us an infinity of Divine grace and tenderness. We cannot define it, describe it, measure it, catalogue items that make it up. It is an atmosphere, a glory that fills the sphere of the Divine Being; it is a temper—a grace that characterises him. Like the word "tender-mercies," it appeals to us as music does. It is an emotion—a feeling appealing to feeling. The word is peculiar to Old Testament Scripture; it translates no word of the New. While we have many terms of tenderness in the New Testament, we have not this peculiar conception or phase of affectionateness; and in the Old Testament it is, with very few exceptions, peculiar to the intense religious feeling of the Psalms. Only in fervid song or in passionate prayer could a Jew have thus spoken of the tender-mercy—the loving-kindness of the Jehovah of Sinai.

It is the Psalmist's conception of God—the expression of his utmost confidence and affection. It does not attain to the conception of Father, as revealed by our Lord. By this name, save in a very vague sense, God was not known until the teaching of the well-beloved Son declared him. Ours is the peculiar and supreme privilege of calling him the "God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." David conceived of him as the great creative and providential Father, characterised by all the practical tenderness that benignity and love could suggest; near to him in protecting presence and bounteous blessing; doing for him "exceeding abundantly above all that he could ask or think."

It was to David a conception of incalculable affluence and preciousness—a tenderness of love and care that inspired him with unspeakable gratitude and love. It is the chosen appellation of his Psalms. It expresses his supreme idea of Jehovah's condescension and love.

In our Christian adoption of it, we necessarily mean much more than he meant. We have ideas to put into our conception of loving-kindness which David never thought of. We can conceive of God only as he reveals himself to us. Our conception of God is not the evolution of our own consciousness, the growth of our own spirituality merely; it is generated by the perception of revealed fact. It may fall below the revelation; it can never rise above it. Since David sung, God has revealed to us new conceptions of incarnate love—of unwearied patience—of self-sacrificing sorrow—of expiatory death—of manifold and unutterable spiritual grace. We therefore use the term enriched by these Christian ideas, enlarged to this Christian significance. In the light of our Christian thought, then, under the inspiration of our Christian gratitude, we say, "Thy loving-kindness is before mine eyes." It is a tender beauty, not of mere religious sentiment, but of Divine characteristic seen in the light of the manifestation of the Son of God.

1. We can speak only in very general terms of the Divine characteristic itself. It is, as I have said, an atmosphere, a temper, a permeating quality of the Divine Being, rather than an attribute.

Loving-kindness is that essential benevolence—that inherent and diffusive goodness, that not only delights to bless, but that cannot do other than bless. It is that necessary benignity of the Divine Being which is the opposite of malevolence or capriciousness, and which expresses itself in every movement of his controlling providence—in every purpose of his pitying love. Indeed, when we speak of expressions of God's loving-kindness, we are simply embarrassed by the crowding varieties of instance and illustration which spring up on every hand. His loving-kindness is as vast and as varied as the expressions of himself; for loving-kindness is his manner of doing all things.

There can be no contradiction in the Divine nature. We cannot conceive of him as kind in one thing and unkind in another. His essential nature expresses itself in every act; his mercy is just, his justice is merciful. The mystery of suffering is not therefore incompatible with loving-kindness. The convulsions of Nature, the catastrophes of Providence, the discipline of grace—so far as we can comprehend them—are no exceptions to it; even to our apprehensions he is often the most merciful when the most severe. He does not suspend his loving-kindness when he inflicts his chastisements. Loving-kindness is the higher law of his being, to which all other laws, all appointments of suffering, are subordinate. Not righteousness only, but love presides over and administers the infliction. Every act, according to its character, is expressive in some way or other of the loving-kindness of God. We cannot conceive of him otherwise. Without love he would lack what he

himself has taught us to regard as an essential quality of goodness.

In the *material creation* we recognise the most obvious indications of loving-kindness. In the forms and conditions of created life, from the rushing planet to the floating atom, from the complex organism of man to the protoplasm of the simplest life, every element and provision will furnish proof and illustration of the Creator's loving-kindness. Whether we unfold the smallest bud, or interrogate the most distant star, it will alike demonstrate the all-pervading benignity of the Creator; the wonderful laws and adaptations of life, the distribution and economy of food, the laws of mechanical forces, the mysteries of chemical combinations, the economy of social dependence—of the race, of the nation, of the household—all are manifestations of loving-kindness that simply exhaust our powers of admiration and gratitude.

Think of man—the human creation that God has placed in the midst, and that he has “set over the works of his hands;”—may we not trace the thoughtful care, the solicitous provisions of God's loving-kindness, in every law of his being? God created man a “living soul,” an intelligent moral being capable of knowing, worshipping and loving his Creator. He is at the head of the creation of God, not because of his surpassing strength or distinctive intelligence, but because of his spiritual faculty. He is a moral soul, capable of religion, capable of communing with his Maker. He can choose good or evil, shun vice, practise virtue, pray and love and serve, hold fellowship of high and holy thought with his God. His spiritual soul can empty itself into the heart of his Father in heaven; can receive the thought, the love, the life of God into itself. This is God's distinctive loving-kindness to us. “Lord, what is man that thou shouldst thus magnify him, and set thine heart upon him?”

In the *providence of God* we see higher forms of his loving-kindness. In his multiplied and marvellous provisions for the happiness of his creatures; in the economy of our social affections and relations; the wonderful emotions that are inspired within us, and the attachments to which they lead. What a subtle mystery there is in human love! What delicate varieties and distinctions of it, and how the love of man and woman lays the foundation of all social life! How the love of a husband differs from the love of a parent; the love of a child from the love of a brother; the love of a friend from the love of a patriot! How mysteriously all are inspired! With what wonderful harmony all contribute to our happiness!

The preservation of our being again, the arrangements and provisions whereby it is protected and sustained, the surroundings of infancy, the nurtur-

ings of youth, the strength of manhood, the shelterings of age; each stage and condition of life having its peculiar adaptations and enrichments, its balance of endurance and enjoyment, of want and provision, of cares and achievements, whereby the great purposes of our being are accomplished, and God's beneficent purposes for our race fulfilled; advantages of birth,—its place, its period, its circumstances; our condition of life,—the adjustment of our outward surroundings to our peculiar temperament; our marvellous sustentation night and day, awake or asleep; our unfailing supplies,—nine hundred millions of men lying down in unconsciousness every night, and every morning finding their table spread; the sustentation of the functions of life in their exquisite and complicated adjustments,—the beating of the heart, the respiration of the lungs, the motions of bodily mechanism; our marvellous preservation from day to day, as, unconcerned and unconscious, we walk the streets, traverse the desert, or go down to the sea in ships, dependent upon a thousand subtle conditions which we cannot control. Amid a thousand exposures to lawless forces or subtle poisons, safe in His protecting hand, we live our sixty or seventy years—years full of enjoyments, in which blessings and satisfactions largely preponderate over privations and miseries. In our embarrassed thought and gathering feeling we cannot describe these things, we can only exclaim, “The earth, O Lord, is full of thy goodness.”

In the *manifestation of God in Christ* we see the crowning illustration of God's loving-kindness, the revelation of God's spiritual character and purposes, his religious thoughts and ways—the redemption of men who have sinned, by the incarnate mediation of his only-begotten Son. You are familiar enough with the illustrations and enhancements of God's loving-kindness, in the mission and grace of Christ. What can be said about it that does not seem inadequate and commonplace—that does not fall infinitely short of its theme? It is easier to describe God's wonderful creation—easier to trace the bountiful ways of his providence—than to estimate the unspeakable grace of his redeeming love—“the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.” What embarrassed utterances of it we find in the Epistles. How intensely passionate, and yet how consciously inadequate; they affirm rather than demonstrate, hint rather than describe. “Behold, what manner of love”—love to the sinful and lost, “without righteousness or strength”—“while we were yet sinners” Christ died for us; love manifesting itself in infinite condescension, privation, and suffering; “humbling itself, making itself of no reputation, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross;” love patiently entreating us, variously and diligently plying us with inducements, fol-

lowing us with pitying tears and yearning love even as we turn away from the Cross, gently reproaching us, tenderly appealing to us, patiently waiting for us, that it may bless us with forgiveness, with a new and blessed life, with a Divine and ineffable fellowship, with an unconceived and inconceivable heaven.

These are but rough classifications of the vast and varied field of God's loving-kindness. Each department is filled with particulars impossible of calculation; "such knowledge is too wonderful for us; we cannot attain to it;" we turn our meditation into a prayer that, "being rooted and grounded in love, we may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge."

II. The characteristic and practical thing in this verse, however, is the attitude of the religious man towards God's "loving-kindness." It expresses not so much the qualities and characteristics of God's loving-kindness as the devout man's recognition of it, and feeling towards it. For instance—

1. How many people there are who see the things of life, who possess and enjoy them, who are the subjects of providential care and movement, but who have no recognition whatever of God as their giver, or of his loving-kindness as their source. The world is full of careless people, whom the great mysteries and marvels of life never excite to thought, who look out upon this wonderful world, and are the subjects of its changeful experiences, but who have no more intellectual curiosity or moral feeling concerning them than the ox that welcomes its fodder. It seems very strange that the marvellous phenomena of God's creation—that the still more marvellous economy of human and social life, the movement and change, the discordant process and harmonious result, the conscious freedom and the controlling laws of our being here—should excite no curiosity: that men with intellects and hearts should be contented day by day to receive food, and to have the functions of life go on, and never seriously inquire concerning the source of all this bounty and power. That it is so is beyond all question. Thousands of men who call themselves intelligent receive every good thing of life as a matter of course, and have never once been incited to serious inquiry whence or how it comes. Ask them, they will glibly enough recite their creed, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth." That is the theory of things they have been taught; but it is purely a traditional theory, that has never excited in them the least emotion. They affirm it, just as they would affirm the first proposition of Euclid. It is part of the common philosophy of

things; no particle of moral feeling, no suspicion of personal obligation, enters into it. They are not atheistic, they do not deny God; they have no rival theory of the universe, but they do not *feel* God, they are simply indifferent. No gifts, no experiences, touch their emotions; they are Godless—"without God in the world;" they have not the faintest sense of "loving-kindness" in God; they do not feel the slightest obligation of gratitude; their heart towards God is simply blank and cold; God is to them a theory of the universe—nothing more. Is not this the life of the majority of men?

2. Another—but a smaller and a more thoughtful—class see in the blessings and experiences of life only the operation of natural laws. Either they deny the existence of a personal God altogether, or they remove him from active, continuous control of the things of human life. They bind him by his own laws. He has formed the constitution of the world, and he cannot interfere with it. He has put great laws in operation, and they must grind out their issues. Human life is dominated by hard law and stern fatalism. This is one of the popular philosophies of the day. I am concerned to say here only that, if it be a true one, it makes life a very cold, unblest thing. If the government of the world be only physical law—if there be in it no movement of a personal God, no care and control of a heavenly Father's love—if I am the object of no Divine thought, no yearning, pitying love—if the natural law that does work around me is not in my heavenly Father's hand—if he has less control over its action than the chemist has over his crucible, than the physician has over disease—if my life is not in God's thought—if what befalls me is out of his control—if he cannot answer me when I pray—if he cannot show me his love, or lift me to communion with himself—then life is a cold desolation indeed; and all the great instincts within me which "thirst for the living God"—all my religious thoughts and emotions and yearnings, which the idea of a living God, a Father in heaven excited—are a bitter, cruel mockery. Whoever made me, however I came into being, the highest and most essential part of my being is in irreconcilable contradiction to fact—"Wherefore hast thou made me a religious being in vain?" There can be no loving-kindness of God "before mine eyes."

3. Some who believe in the personal God, and in his personal control of life, put hard constructions upon what he does. They see in him only a stern severity, and in his doings only a ruthless infliction. The sense of endurance; the feeling of struggle, disappointment, sorrow, and pain, overpowers all other feelings. "I know thee, that thou art a hard master," exacting, relentless, unsparing; and the material sense of suffering is permitted to

overpower the instincts of nature, the teachings of Scripture, the recognitions of faith. Sense is stronger than soul, and these cannot believe in the loving-kindness that does not make them happy; as if mere sensational or emotional happiness were the highest good of a human life. Many people—even religious people—get into this habit of putting harsh constructions upon God's doings with them. How terribly Job had to struggle against the tendency. Even David thought for a moment that he had "cleansed his heart in vain, and washed his hands in innocence." Now, just in proportion as we permit these interpretations of mere sense to prevail, we shall fail in having God's loving-kindness before our eyes.

How, then, may we attain to this religiousness of recognition? What are the processes, and what are the conditions of this devout perception, this holy habit of life?

I do not think we can attain to it by any intellectual reasonings about God; by propositions or demonstrations concerning his nature and attributes. I do not think that any scientific truths about God's creation will produce it—that any philosophy of God's providence will produce it. I do not think that a correct theology will produce the feeling that the Psalmist expresses. I may draw up a correct theological creed, and conscientiously repeat it. I may confess sincerely and intelligently that God is good; but this is not the state of feeling, that in its fervent worship and gratitude, says, "Thy loving-kindness is before mine eyes." It will not result from moral virtue—from conscientious law-keeping—from careful right-doing.

Is it not clear that the feeling that the Psalmist expresses is an expression of fervent spiritual life; that it is the intense love of his religious soul that finds utterance? God's loving-kindness will be revealed to us only through our interpreting love; it is the revelation, not of theological dogma, but of religious sympathy. We all know how differently the same thing presents itself to different persons, and to the same person in different moods. It is not so much that the intellectual power is different, but the sympathy is different. In the cold grey light of an indifferent heart how hard and uninteresting everything seems, how impossible to convince it of goodness and love; but in the warm red glow of a loving heart what a depth of meaning it has. How keenly loving purposes are recognised by loving sympathies; what a favourable construction we put upon everything; how readily we believe. If I ask, therefore, how I am to put God's loving-kindness before my eyes, the reply is, not that I am to begin reasoning about the Divine attributes, or cataloguing the Divine doings. Let me rather begin by quickening the love of my religious

heart. It is not the object that wants placing, so much as it is the eye that wants adjusting. Proofs of God's loving-kindness surround me everywhere—pervade my life—fill my history. If I had but the eye to see and interpret them, I could not look without beholding them. It is the eye that I need—the eye that looks out of the heart of love. With the heart of love therefore I must begin. I cannot do it by a mere act of will; I cannot do it by mere inventories of creation and providence. I can do it only by the nurture of loving sympathies; by kindling my heart to intenser feeling; by plying it with all that can nurture love; by meditation; by prayer; by the indwelling Spirit; by the "love of Christ shed abroad in my heart;" by "the Holy Ghost given unto me;" by the habit of loving trust, of loving interpretation. Never mind the intellectual perception; what I specially need is the emotional sympathy, the gratitude, the love; and I know enough for the soliciting of that. If I can but kindle my heart to a fervour of Divine love, I shall see clearly enough "the loving-kindness of the Lord." If, then, creation is a religious blank to me; if Providence is an uncontrolled accident; if I mourn over the absence of religious recognition, the one simple, sufficient, and only effective remedy is to put fervour into my religious soul, to love more ardently; for loving hearts see nothing but loving-kindness.

III. Hence, lastly, the great practical religious importance of such a temper and attitude of soul. When a man has attained to this; when he looks out upon a God of loving-kindness, the entire character and colouring of his life is changed; the things may be the same, but they are transfused and glorified to him. The tender light of love is upon them; they are things of his heavenly Father's loving-kindness, and the love of his filial heart rejoices in them as such. He "walks all day in the light of God's countenance;" a Divine feeling pervades all things; he realises a life hidden with Christ in God; everything to him has a Divine meaning; everything is a loving gift; everything elicits a loving recognition. Perfect love sees no fancied faults; charity "believeth all things."

1. How rapturous the gratitude that prosperity elicits. Every gift is interpreted and received as an expression of the heavenly Father's love. How could prosperity destroy us? How could we abuse wealth, or home riches, or physical enjoyments, if God's loving-kindness were before our eyes—if every enjoyment were a sacrament? What a double blessing it would carry—the blessing of its own good—the blessing of a Father's gift.

2. How prompt and cheerful the discharge of duty would be. Every service would be an act of gratitude—an expression of love. How could we stint or grudge the service that acknowledged



"This book that I hold is His precious Word"—p. 362.

loving-kindness? Our vision full of loving-kindness, we should rejoice in every service or sacrifice that could express gratitude. Duty would be, not the burden of a slave, not the anxious demand of conscience, but the free, joyous self-sacrifice and abandonment of love.

3. How patient and trustful we should be in adversity and suffering! Even these would become a Gospel. We should learn the great lesson that the tenderest loving-kindness may embody itself in forms of severity. It is but a low and feeble spiritual life that can discern good only in pleasant things. A larger spiritual understanding—a deeper spiritual perception—discerns good also, often the highest good, in painful things—in the chastisement as much as in the caress. Let God's loving-kindness be "before our eyes," and it will be difficult for us to think him unkind. "Though he slay us, yet will we trust in him."

4. What a strength it would be in temptation. When the low pleasures of sense are urged upon our preference—when the glitter of the world and its kingdoms is flashed before our eyes; what a talisman it would be if our thought and heart


were filled with recognitions of God's loving-kindness!

5. And when the stroke of the last enemy lays us low; when "heart and flesh fail," and earthly love can no longer bring its succours; what a stay and a strength for the soul to be filled with the vision of God's loving-kindness. He is "the strength of our heart and our portion for ever." "I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day."

Thus, if the loving-kindness of God is before our eyes, it will put everything before us in benignant aspects; or, rather, it will transfigure our vision of everything. It will make life bright, hopeful, and joyous; we shall interpret all things lovingly; it will transform our own moods; the loving heart will look out upon the various doings of the loving Father, and our earthly life will become Divine.

Blessed, therefore, is the man who has nurtured his spiritual life and love into such strength and fervour, that he is wise to "understand the loving-kindness of the Lord."

HIS WORD.

ONG ago there came to the earth
A little babe, by the gate of birth,
And, lo! in the heavens there shone a star,
And the wise men followed it from afar.

And the star stood over the humble shed
Where the baby lay in His manger-bed;
And the wise men knelt with their gifts of gold,
For this was the King that had been foretold.

And the babe grew up unto man's estate,
And earned for his love but a meed of hate;
Yet meekly He turned to His Father then,
And prayed He would smile on the sons of men.

Then he went away by the gate of death,
But He blessed mankind with His latest breath,
And His Spirit rose on its wings to heaven,
To plead that the wicked might be forgiven.


Though centuries many away have rolled
Since the wise men knelt with their gifts of gold,
The good of the earth bow down to-day
To the babe that once in a manger lay.

He left a message of love to cheer
Ere He went to God, and a Word to hear—
This Book that I hold is His precious Word,
And happy are they that have seen and heard.

MATTHIAS BARE

A NIGHT OUT OF CATALOGUE.

BY FREDERIKA RICHARDSON, AUTHOR OF "KING HALE," "XAVIER AND I," ETC. ETC.

IME—eight o'clock one Saturday night; place—Tottenham Court Road, right side of the way, looking towards New Oxford Street. If you have no idea what that means, there would not be much use in my attempt to describe it. On this particular Saturday, though, the usual characteristics had an additional zest, thanks to a drizzling, continuous rain. The savour of the truckloads of mouldy cabbages was more officiously candid; the tallow candles on the jewellery and picture stalls went out oftener, and guttered away in grease in a more dimly depressing manner; the vendors were especially hoarse and angrily vo-

ciferous; the little, shrivelled, bent old woman, with the ghastly grin and the eager hawk-like eyes, looked more of a witch than ever, as she leant forward through the mist to leer, and shake her tambourines at every passing child. The one-legged sailor, his ringlets dripping on to his gold earrings, sat in the mud with a specially devoted air, sheltering with a huge cotton umbrella his picture of the whale (and, by the way, I never can quite understand the exact connection between the monster and his vanished limb, but I suppose, if I could muster sufficient courage to stand and read the poetry in the corner, I should); whilst on the pavement, added to the usual jostling and

hustling and skirmishing with elbows and shoulders, came in the adjunct of umbrellas—in irritable and exasperated hands, too, for to be damp and chilly, and to have one's feet constantly describing semicircles on the greasy mud independently of one's will, is certainly a combination calculated to put one out of humour. Which may, in some measure, account for the cutting neglect with which Mr. Timothy Tittlebat—"inventor," as the board upon his chest proclaimed, of "the Universal Child's-play Corkscrew"—was treated, on the night in question.

He had drawn himself up beneath a lamp, so as to have his experiment with the soda-water bottles in full light. Nothing could have succeeded better. The corks came out with a deliciously seductive pop, that on any other occasion would have attracted a host of admirers. As it was, his only audience was a diminutive boy, struck open-mouthed with admiration, who every now and then, at a specially harmonious triumph, vouchsafed him the encouragement—

"Go it, guv'nor! that was a one-er, that was."

"I'll give them one last chance," said Mr. Tittlebat, taking in a good breath of the damp air for a supreme effort. "Here you are, ladies and gentlemen—here you are! Yes, this is the Universal Child's-play Corkscrew, in use among the highest circles in the land. Price one penny. Don't spend your breath, spile your lungs, and bust your bottles. Buy this elegant article, compressible, in neat pasteboard box fit for the pocket. Price one penny! Champagne, pale ale, or sherry wine—here you are! Easy to grip, simple to work, suitable to the handling of delicate females, or children of tender years. Here you are, ladies and gentlemen, here you are!"

Here they weren't, though. The crowd struggled by, quite taken up with its own dampness and muddiness and pugnacity, which induced an unusually economical spirit, so that it haggled over its onions, and grew quarrelsome on the subject of cabbages. Scarcely had it an eye for roast chestnuts, nor even jam turnovers. It stands to reason that so purely intellectual an enjoyment as the Universal Child's-play was quite beyond its level.

But what the people did with their ears was the wonder—with their nerves, too. Timothy lay in wait for both, suddenly burst out with a roar from the ambush of a low whisper, rose without any preparation from *profondo basso* to a shrill falsetto, lead expectation to look out for a shriek, and disappointed it, at the critical moment, by falling down to a sonorous growl—all to no effect. He couldn't so much as startle one head into looking in his direction.

"I may as well shut up shop," said Mr. Tittlebat, with the sense of injury strong upon him; "they don't heed me, no more than if I was an

alligator!" which was true, in one sense, though it is probable the monster alluded to might have attracted some attention.

A deft, quick-witted, shifty man, this Timothy Tittlebat—with a hopeful heart, too, and a certain whimsical talent Society might have done well to enlist and cultivate, one would think. Clearly Society had thought otherwise, though;—it not only had left no door ajar, by which Timothy might enter and fill some vacant place, but had been at special pains to bar both doors and windows in the face of him; so that, with no great harm about him, he was now far on the road to becoming a confirmed vagabond—about as difficult to reclaim to any regular and useful mode of life as a Red Indian. Still, when one remembers how many, on whom all care and favour are lavished, leave the world no richer for their passage through it, even by a new corkscrew, one is not disposed to be hard on poor Timothy, nor others of his stamp; the less so, because Providence, a power with which we fancy we have nothing to do, takes that special necessity off our hands. Surely it is hard enough to have gradually impressed upon one the conviction that one has broken into life burglariously, and holds possession to the detriment of others, not greatly to one's own benefit, as far as one can see. Hard, too, to be hedged out on every side from the general interest, the general struggle, the general hope—to pause on the country high road, and watch the field-labourer at his toil; perhaps, in seasons of extra stress, to lend a helping hand—to lend it only—then to fall back into the useless vagrant, with no purpose in life, no abiding-place, no goal. Hard to pass through the streets of cities towards evening, and see men of every rank returning from their business to their homes, oneself to fill a place in no rank, to have no home, and yet in momentary glimpses, such as come to every being whom that Breath has made a living soul, to perceive (dimly, it may be, as one sees the form and radiance of the heavenly stars) a possible destiny quite other than this one that is; to look forth from the shade at this picture in the dazzle of the light, and fill the vague outline from the store of wasted and distorted energies and broken sympathies, such as bind men to their kind. Hardest of all, to lose this power of regret—to grow to acquiesce in this ban of outlawry, and even, in a dangerously hopeless and sullen way, become reconciled to it.

But there was nothing hopeless about Timothy Tittlebat, nor sullen either, though you must admit it was enough to make him both. You see, he had counted on the Universal Child's-play to provide him with a bed; so that, added to his humiliation as an artist, was his discomfort as a man. The rain had ceased, and there was even a smudged, untidy moon, that wanted rounding off

sadly, looking down from the murky sky; still it was damp and muddy and cold—not by any means the sort of night one would have chosen to pass out in the open air.

With no special purpose, the wanderer pushed his way through the stream of people, that was sufficiently thinned now to dispense with the need of elbowing. Was it fancy, or were they really wending all in one direction—the opposite to that which he felt impelled to take? Timothy didn't quite realise why, but the impression was an uncomfortable one; so that he escaped from it as soon as possible, into the solitude of the New Road.

A strange, fantastic neighbourhood this—of a grotesque aspect only in the daylight, but borrowing gravity from the darkness, and peopling it with weird forms and outlines, of a certain affinity with the night. For example, the ladders, standing upright on the houses' roofs, were suggestive, in the sun, of no other idea than the great probability of their tumbling down, and doing an incalculable amount of mischief; also of some curiosity as to how they were got into this precarious position, of what manner of man put them there, and what manner of motive he had. But now, looking as though they were wrought out of the blackness, and towering up indefinitely, so that for all one knew the clouds alone bounded their summits, they seemed a means of communication let down from heaven to earth; and even Timothy Tittlebat, who, it is probable, had never heard of Jacob's dream, and whose conceptions as to angels were of the haziest, half looked to see shadowy figures ascending and descending—possibly carrying skyward the day's load of tears, and returning thence with comfort.

The centaur above the chimney-maker's opposite, too, made quite an impressive appearance, with his bow extended, and the arrow just ready to fly off, though why it should be directed against a globe, girt with more than its share of equators and zones, I should be glad if any mythological scholar will inform me.

"You'll never hit it that way, you know," said Timothy, in a tone of mild remonstrance; "it's as clear as a pike your aim is too high, by a hand and more. A beast of your uncommon sort might have found that out, one would think, not to mention the time you've been at it."

But the real wonder was in the sculpture yards, a little further on. A heterogeneous collection of races and epochs and ideas were assembled here, in stony fellowship: Pan, busy on pipes, close to the ear of Mr. Pitt, in full oratorical action; St. John the Baptist, side by side with the Babes in the Wood, in the act of handing each other blackberries; Prometheus, writhing on his rock, smiled on blandly by the Prince Consort, who seemed to be congratulating him on their

having omitted the vulture; lions, doing their utmost to look fierce at little boys, in scant apparel, upsetting flower-baskets; dolphins, curling up their tails in a way more usually ascribed to squirrels; monkeys, with their heads always on one side, constantly inspecting the pips of a bitten apple, &c.; over these, and more than these, Athene (of the "clear eyes" no longer) kept watch, stretching her arm out as though to warn back the living; whilst to her right was the arched gateway designed as an entrance to a tomb, bearing the inscription, "Sacred to the memory of —." The place for the name, or names, was left a blank.

Our friend Timothy had come to a stand before the railings, to the left of the goddess. There was a certain Roman in a toga and casque—and so saying I describe his costume faithfully—who had a strange fascination for Timothy, though he was about as ugly a Roman as you might wish to see, and Timothy made no attempt to disguise the fact.

"And yet you've a 'naughty look with it," he said, in a pitying tone. "I dare lay a penny, now, you thought a precious deal of yourself when you was alive." Mr. Tittlebat seemed to labour under the impression that he was addressing a sort of petrified mummy. "You never looked to come out in plaster, and to be left of a night without a bit of straw even, which it keeps the statues likely to sell, from cracking, through the frosts. But it don't much matter whether *you* cracks or no, nobody wouldn't buy you, not if they let you go ever so cheap. Why, they wouldn't know what to do with a great, ugly, awkward chap like you, you know, when they'd got you." Then, adding the whole explanation of the attraction the figure had for him. "The truth is, you're about as cumbersome a bit of stature as I'm a man; 'taint your fault, nor yet, as I see, mine; but we're just rubbish, the pair of us."

Our hero's disposition was too elastic to dwell long upon this gloomy aspect of the question, but the bond of common misfortune between himself and the Roman suggested another reflection.

"Any way, you're high and dry to-night," he said facetiously, "and it's sloppy and cold down here; you might have asked me to step up, it wouldn't have cost you nothing, and I'd have took it kind."

Overlooking this impolite omission on the part of his fellow-sufferer, and having assured himself there were no passers to observe him, Timothy sprang on to the ledge and swung himself over the railings, adding his own presence to the motley company. Though he was not a man to be daunted by imaginative terrors, he could not repress a certain uneasiness as he moved among the white frigid figures, and met the blank stare of the lifeless eyes. Finally, shaking off his

nervousness, he established himself close to the dolphin with the curling tail, emptied out of his hat the unsold specimens of the Universal Child's-play into the basin formed by this eccentric characteristic, and, having hung his hat on the tail's supreme tip, proceeded to invest his head and throat in a capacious woollen scarf, until he had the appearance of an ogre-baby from a Dutch quarter of Goblinland. After this he drew out of his pocket a newspaper parcel containing broken meat, and being eager for his supper, fell to with a clasp knife.

"Which I'm sure," said Timothy aloud, uneasily conscious that all these sightless eyes were intent upon him, and speaking to keep his courage up, "it's hearty welcome any of you ladies or gents, or otherwise" (this with a dubious eye upon a grinning satyr opposite) "would be to a bite with me if you hadn't got over the need of victuals, likewise liquor—a very convenient thing, I'm sure, and a art I'd be very glad to know myself, very glad indeed I'd be."

Having concluded his meal, and before composing himself to sleep, he favoured his companions with another somewhat nervous inspection.

"You're a stony-eyed set, and no mistake," was his comment; "but I've known a many such in my time, and stony hearts too—maybe more so than any here."

Was it a flutter of white moonlight across the statues, or in very deed did their lips move, and their heads bow a grave assent? Timothy sat bolt upright, rubbed his eyes, then looked again. There was only the satyr laughing at him, and as he turned his head the dolphin's normal grin seemed to have expanded sensibly.

"I'm a boiled owl!" he exclaimed, and that was a very strong expression with him; then he fitted his head into a bend in the dolphin's brow, and shutting his eyes tight, resolved to fall asleep—and did it too.

They only waited for that, it would seem; certainly his slumbers hadn't lasted long, when a sort of breeziness and rustling caused him to open one eyelid; and—well, you never did, or if you did, it's so much the worse for you, and a sign you must have had a very bad nightmare. For they were all of them at it—not excepting the lions, nor St. John the Baptist, nor Mr. Pitt, who indeed stepped it with the best. Away they danced, up the middle and down again, in and out, to and fro, deserving especial praise for the neat manner in which they avoided all collision, so that even the jagged draperies of the Three Graces (inseparable on account of the arms of two of them growing affectionately from the shoulders of the third) didn't get the least bit chipped.

Thus they—stiff and white and ghastly, cold as ever, whilst the moonbeams glimmered on their

hard blank faces and lifeless eyes, and seemed to take a part in the revelry.

Timothy Tittlebat, meanwhile, had eyes for but one figure. Yes, there sure enough was the Roman, large as life—larger, unless he had once enjoyed gigantic proportions. The worst of it was, he too seemed to have some special design on the watcher, for he performed his steps always in the vicinity of the dolphin, and presently came to a stand just by the intruder's side.

"Timothy Tittlebat, Timothy Tittlebat!" said a hollow voice.

"Meaning me, sir?" responded our hero, his teeth chattering.

"Meaning you. To-night, with more justice than you thought, perhaps, you compared your lot with mine, your uselessness with my own, your miserable failure as a man, with my miserable failure as a work of art."

"No offence, sir, I hope?" insinuated Timothy, apologetically.

"I have said the comparison was just," the voice returned. "It is true, also, that such as we are—rubbish, I think, was the word you used?"

Mr. Tittlebat gave a deprecating murmur of assent.

"We are not of our own contrivance; we are the creatures of our time, of its small aims and mighty greed, of its rapacity, of its contempt for man, of its disregard of noble work that has not self-interest for motive. Still, being what we are, we cannot remain guiltless. Because I am a libel on the type I represent; because I am a dishonour to the beautiful art of which I profess to be a child; because I publish and establish, as a fact, the meanness of the mind by which I was produced; because, offending as I do all laws of symmetry and taste, my existence may serve as an excuse for the toleration of deformity like my own, therefore, unhappy fellow-outcast, raise your hand and dash me into fragments."

"Not on any account, sir," said Timothy. "I couldn't do it; on my life I couldn't."

"Why not?" asked the Roman; "why condemn me to an existence pernicious to others and shameful to myself?"

"Why, you see," Mr. Tittlebat's voice was very faint, "when I'd been and gone and—as you forcibly put it, sir—dashed you into fragments, why, on the same grounds, the next thing to do would be to serve myself the same way."

"Just what I should recommend," replied the statue.

"Should you indeed, sir?" said our hero, dubiously; "but you see, supposing there weren't no other objections (which the Universal Child's-play and others *might* come in), it wouldn't be easy to me, because—not meaning any disrespect to you, sir, I'm sure—I'm not brittle."

It was an immense relief to Timothy to see an almost human smile flit across the Roman's face.

"No," he answered, "you are not brittle—not the best part of you; the strong man's heart, which the mere shell of evil habits, and reckless indolence, and spiritless indifference, I would have you break to bits, has not choked out yet, I see. It's all very well for me, who am but plaster; but if I were a living man, I wouldn't let circumstances mould me like a bit of clay; I'd strain at them, until I bent them to take the form I chose, remembering that it was just such as I am—men as rough and ignorant and friendless, who wrestled with the world and polished it; who conquered all the science and knowledge that we own; who woke up the slumbering relations that

bind land to land, and life to life; and made this very social fabric, which needs men of the same stamp as its founders to widen it. I would find better work than to moan over my deformity, if I were a man like you."

"And who told you it's not better work I have in my mind just now?" cried Timothy, excitedly, clutching hard on to the dolphin's jaw. It is to be supposed that the patience of that much-enduring creature was exhausted, and that it shook him off; anyway, his head jerked down with a smart rap on to the pavement; and when he picked himself up the statues were all quietly in their places again, and the Roman staring blindly as ever into the road, and the new day both for Timothy and the world (but especially Timothy) was beginning to dawn.

TOMMY WILSON'S TEMPTATION.

HAVE a piece of good news for you, Tommy," said his mother one day, when her little son came home from school. "Mr. Clayton has been here, and says he wants a garden boy. He thinks you are about the age to suit him, so you are to go to-morrow for a week on trial, and if he finds you answer, you are to be kept on with five shillings a week wages. The workman's bell rings at six o'clock regular every evening, which will leave you time to keep up your schooling a bit."

"Oh, mother, that is good news!" cried Tommy, joyfully; "why, we were only saying the other day what a help it would be if I was able to earn a little money. I'll work so hard, I'm sure it shan't be my fault if I don't give satisfaction and get kept on. Jack Brown was talking to-day at school about the place, and saying his father was trying to get it for him. What could have put it into Mr. Clayton's head to have me, mother?"

"Well, it's to your credit, my boy," replied Mrs. Wilson, with a smile, "so I don't mind telling you; a little wholesome praise does no one any harm. He just stepped down to Mr. Sidney's, and asked him which of his Sunday-school boys he would recommend. Teacher said there were several he hoped would prove trustworthy, but that, as he must name one, he would mention Tommy Wilson as having been always a steady, honest, truth-telling boy. There, Tommy! that's a good character for you," concluded his mother with a hearty kiss.

Tommy looked highly pleased. "It was rare and good of teacher to speak up for me like that," he said; "why, mother, five shillings a week is a regular fortune! I'll be able to give you a fine warm shawl at Christmas, see if I aint, and, maybe, we'll be rich enough to have a real plum-pudding too, not a make-believe of currants and rice like we had last year."

"Don't reckon your chickens before they are hatched," said Mrs. Wilson, laughing. "You are in the place now, sure enough, but you have got to keep it; not that I am afraid of you," she added more gravely, "you have got the fear of God, I hope and trust, before your eyes, and them that has that need never fear of going very far astray, if they only pray to be always guided aright."

Tommy fidgeted a little at these concluding remarks; he was not feeling exactly in the mood to receive good advice—had he not heard a moment ago that he was looked upon as the most trustworthy boy in the whole Sunday-school, and had not the teacher picked him out for the place before all the other boys? So he answered his mother in rather a self-sufficient tone—

"Oh yes, mother, I know all that, of course; I don't think you need be afraid of me, I'll do well, you'll see."

"I think," said Mrs. Wilson, "teacher would only take it grateful of you if you went down and thanked him for speaking so kindly of you to Mr. Clayton."

"So I will, mother," said Tommy, gladly. "This is just the time to find him in, so I will go at once."

Mr. Sidney was an old bachelor who lived in a small house at the end of the village. Ever since he had first settled there, now many years ago, he had taught in the Sunday-school, and had always taken a great interest in watching the various members of it as they grew old enough to set out in the world and earn their living for themselves, so when he heard a knock at his sitting-room door, and saw Tommy Wilson enter the room, he laid down his book with a kind smile.

"Well, my lad," he said, "you have come, I suppose, to tell me about your good fortune in getting Mr. Clayton's place?"

"Yes, sir," answered Tommy; "and, please sir, I have come to thank you for having been so good as

to speak of me as you did. Only for that I would not have had more chance of the place than the rest."

"Well, well," interrupted Mr. Sidney, "you need not thank me too much. After all, it's your own conduct got it for you; if I had not reason to believe you honest and truthful I should not have said a word about you. But remember, you are now to be tried more than you have been yet; there may be many occasions in which you will be sorely tempted to do what is wrong; for instance, you must recollect that those hours of the day which your master pays you for working in, are his, not yours, so be careful not to idle or waste away any of them; also you may be very often tempted by seeing ripe fruit near you, and an opportunity for stealing some without fear of detection; then remember above all things this solemn truth, that you are never alone, the Great All-seeing One is ever looking down on you, grieved that you yield to sin, but able to give strength to resist all trials that may come in your way. You must ask God every day to help you, a poor little sinful boy, to do what is right, and you may be sure, if you ask him with all your heart, he will hear you. Of course," continued Mr. Sidney, "you will come to Sunday-school as usual. Mr. Clayton tells me Saturday is always a half-holiday with his garden boys, on purpose to give them time in which to prepare their Bible lesson. I am glad you came down to see me, as I was anxious to say these few words to you before you take what may prove a very important step in your life. Here is a text," he added, handing Tommy a small card, "which I wish you would nail up over your bed, so that you will be sure to see it every night and morning, and that will help to keep you in remembrance of our conversation this afternoon."

Tommy looked at his card. The words were: "Thou God seest me," printed in very plain, large letters, and there was a little loop of ribbon fastened at the top, so that it could be easily hung on a nail.

"And now good-bye," said Mr. Sidney, holding out his hand. "I shall hope to hear that you are going on steadily and well, trying always to do what is right and pleasing in the sight of both heavenly and earthly masters."

Tommy went for several days to Mr. Clayton's garden, and worked so industriously that at the end of the week the gardener told his master that, as the new boy seemed to suit the place, he might as well be kept on.

And now Tommy would have done very well had he been more humble-minded; but he grew each day more wise in his own eyes, and less attentive and thoughtful over his prayers.

One morning he awoke and found it was much later than usual.

"I can't say my prayers this morning," he thought; "it would make me so very late I should catch a scolding. It won't matter much for one

morning;" and hurrying on his clothes he hastened away.

But one little step in the wrong direction, how often it leads to others; and so it proved with Tommy.

The first day, indeed, that he left his room without speaking one grateful word to the kind Father who had watched over him all the night he felt rather uncomfortable; but the feeling gradually wore off, and when the next morning he happened again to be a little late, he stifled the voice of his conscience as well as he could, and once more omitted to say his prayers.

Then there came not only mornings but evenings in which he thought himself so tired he could not pray. Mr. Sidney's card seemed to look down upon him reproachfully at these times, but he always turned away impatiently, saying to himself, "Oh, some day when I am less tired, or have more time, it will be all right again."

He knew that he was doing wrong—knew it, yet did not ask for God's help to struggle against it; for in spite of these occasional pricks of conscience, he was feeling on the whole very well satisfied with himself. But no one ever yet did what is right by themselves, and I am afraid we shall soon see how this little boy's self-sufficiency and forgetfulness, for a time, of God, brought him into sad trouble and temptation.

One fine summer evening in autumn Tommy's work was finished; for the workman's bell would ring directly, and he was sitting resting himself under a tree after his long afternoon's labour of weeding flower-beds. His face felt hot, and his back rather stiff from stooping, and as he lay there on the grass he began to think how nice and refreshing some of those large juicy apples would be that hung so temptingly over the orchard wall at the end of the garden.

"They hang so low I am sure by climbing on the wall I could touch them with my hand," he thought; and then he began admiring their size and colour, wondering if they tasted as good as they looked.

Now Tommy went every Sunday to the school, as I have told you before, and it had only been at his very last lesson Mr. Sidney had explained the meaning of those words: "Lead us not into temptation." He had told the boys that whenever they felt tempted to be cross, untruthful, or dishonest, they ought to ask God to give them grace to resist the temptation, and so surely as they asked him, he would help them to overcome it.

If Tommy had chosen to remember these words, I think he would not have remained admiring and looking at those rosy apples, until at last he began wishing for one.

"It can do no harm any way, just to see if I can touch them by standing on the wall;" and as he

thought this he got up, and looking cautiously round to see that no one was near, he went towards the orchard.

The wall looked much higher when he got near it; but there were loose stones here and there, and by stepping on these, and holding on by the boughs of the apple-tree, he soon managed to swing himself up on the wall. Several large apples were quite within easy reach of his hand. Scarcely thinking what he was doing, without another moment's hesitation he stretched out his arm and pulled the largest apple from the bough.

It looked so inviting he thought he must begin at once, and it was already half eaten when the garden-door banged with a loud clap, and he heard steps coming down the path. In a moment he stuffed the apple into his pocket, and flinging himself over the side of the wall, prepared to get down; but the stone on which rested his whole weight gave way beneath him, and with a scream of pain he fell heavily to the ground.

His cry brought Mr. Clayton to the spot, for his had been the step which had first alarmed Tommy. When he saw the little boy lying under the orchard-wall he guessed at once how things had happened. He did not say anything just then, however, he only asked him where he felt pain, and on Tommy's pointing to his foot, he found his ankle had been badly sprained.

"I will put you into a more comfortable position," said Mr. Clayton, "while I go and call two of the men to carry you home;" and as he stooped to place the boy with his back against a tree which grew near, the half-eaten apple rolled out of Tommy's pocket and fell on the ground at his master's feet.

Tommy hung his head with shame, while Mr. Clayton said gravely, "I am very much disappointed in you, Tommy. I thought you were an honest little boy, and could be trusted in the garden with fruit; but I will speak to you about this by-and-by. I must call some one now to carry you home, as you seem in great pain."

Great was poor Mrs. Wilson's sorrow and distress when she saw Tommy come home in such sad plight, and heard the story of the accident; for sorry as she was to see him in pain, she was still more grieved to think her little son could have been so wicked and dishonest as to try and take what was not his own.

When the doctor came and saw the ankle, he said it was dislocated, and that for six weeks it must be kept still and not used in any way.

In two or three days Mr. Clayton came, and when Tommy told him how sorry he felt for what he had done, and begged to be forgiven, his master said, "I shall forgive you on this occasion, as I think you seem truly sorry for your fault. You have asked for my forgiveness, Tommy, but I hope you have asked God's also, and that from this time you may say

daily, not only with your lips but your heart, 'Lord, lead me not into temptation, but deliver me from evil.'"

The day he was able to return to his work again was, indeed, a joyful one for Tommy. He did not forget this morning, as he had done six weeks before, to ask God's blessing on the day before him, and so set out with a heart at peace with God.

His work was on the other side of the garden, far away from the apple-trees; but on his way home he went round by the orchard. It was altered in some way since last he had been there; the apples had all been gathered long before, and the loose stones in the wall had been put back neatly into their places again: and Tommy's heart had been changed and renewed in those six weeks also, as now, kneeling on the very spot where his master had found him, he said this little prayer; "O Lord, grant for Christ's sake that whenever I am tempted to do what is wrong, I may always remember that 'Thou God seest me.'"

"THE QUIVER" BIBLE CLASS.

105. The term "Most High God" occurs but three times in the New Testament.

106. How often does St. Mark appeal to the prophets respecting Christ?

107. To the prophecy, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness," &c. (Isa. xl. 3), St. Luke adds another. Give it, and assign a reason for his so doing.

108. On what two occasions only were the apostles absent from our Lord during his public ministry?

109. On what occasion did St. Paul become a "Jew to the Jews?"

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGE 336.

95. Saul's dethronement foretold by the rending of Samuel's garment (1 Sam. xv. 23). Abijah's prophecy respecting the rending of the twelve tribes out of the hand of Solomon (1 Kings xi. 31).

96. Acts xxi. 11. Agabus prophesying St. Paul's deliverance to the Jews at Jerusalem.

97. Numb. xxxiii. 39 (Aaron); 1 Sam. iv. 15 (Eli); 2 Chron. xxiv. 15 (Jehoiada).

98. (1) 2 Cor. xi. 25—"Once was I stoned;" see Acts xiv. 19. (2) 2 Cor. xi. 33—"In a basket was I let down by the wall;" see Acts ix. 25. (3) Gal. ii. 12—"Before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles;" see Acts xi. 3—"Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them." (4) 1 Cor. xv. 8—"Last of all he was seen of me also;" see Acts ix. 3, 5, 7.

99. 2 Kings iv. 23. "Wherefore wilt thou go to him to-day? it is neither new moon, nor Sabbath."

100. Eliakim, son of Hilkiah; Joah, son of Asaph; Shebna's father is omitted, and by reference to Isa. xxii. 15, it would seem that he was a stranger.